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Painting wood and pulp ware

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PAINTING WOOD AND PULP WARE



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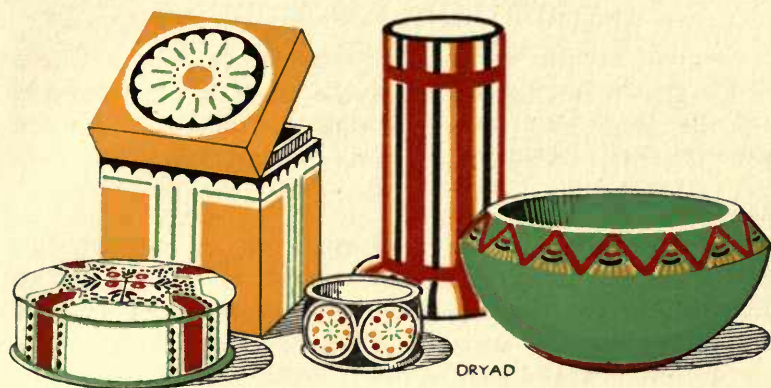
THE painting of wood and pulp ware has many advantages as a school or home craft. The cost is very small and the finished articles are not only attractive, but are at the same time useful. Also where it is desirable to sell the work done by students at school, to defray expenses, these decorated wooden articles will be found to have a ready sale. There is ample scope for originality in design and colour, and what can be more acceptable as a present than one of these painted boxes or bowls? The personality expressed in the gift would be much appreciated, and add greatly to its value. Not until a start has been made will the worker realise what splendid results can be obtained and the amount of pleasure to be derived thereby.

DESIGN AND COLOUR

Consider first the shape of the article to be decorated, and decide on the main points of decoration. If the pattern is confined to definite parts of the article, it becomes more precious and is often more effective than when made to cover it entirely. For example, a small round box could have a circular border of pattern on its lid with the remainder of the box in plain colour, while the corners both of the lid and sides of a rectangular box could be emphasised by decorating them with pattern. The type of design selected should be simple in all cases. Fine elaborate work is not suitable and only labour wasted. Some wooden and pulp articles decorated with simple designs are shown on page 3 and in Plates 1 and 2. These will give the worker some idea of the type of design to use. For further suggestions the Dryad Picture No. 5 and Coloured Illustration Sheet No. 8 will be found useful, and also the Dryad Leaflet No. 17, "Simple Pattern Making."

The colour and marking of the wood can be allowed to have its share in the design, meaning that parts of the wood can be left undecorated. This will help to make the other colours sparkle and give a clean, crisp appearance. In all designs, whether geometrical or floral, the result should suggest a free-hand treatment rather than something mechanically correct, which gives the appearance of a stamped pattern instead of handwork. The use of the brush can be brought into evidence with good effect, making similar designs to those on hand-painted china. Natural forms must be simplified. The gay effect of a bunch of flowers may be expressed without any attempt to imitate all the details of real flowers.

The design and colour are closely related, one helping to make the other. Colour is important and does much towards the final result, for if the design is pleasing but the colour uninteresting, so will be the finished article. Good bright colours are therefore essential to make the article attractive.



METHOD OF APPLYING DESIGN.

The design can either be drawn directly on to the article, or traced on.

(1) When drawing the design, the principal points are fixed by measurements and marked on the object, and the main outlines sketched in with a pencil. This method is recommended as it is quicker and simpler, particularly if the surface does not happen to be a flat one.

(2) Tracing can be carried out in either of the following ways:—

(a) Make a careful tracing of the design with a clear black pencil line, place this with pencil side to the wood, and hold it very firmly with the left hand. With the back edge of the blade of a penknife, rub firmly backwards and forwards in a slanting direction until every line is transferred to the wood. This method reverses the pattern and would not do for words or letters. The pressure must be firm and regular, and care must be taken to avoid denting the wood.

(b) When the tracing has been made, rub the back of the paper with a heel ball or black lead, and place this on the wood with the design uppermost. Draw over the design again with a point, taking care not to press the point into the wood.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR PAINTING WOODEN GOODS.

To make sure the surface of the wood is quite smooth, rub the article over with a piece of fine glass paper, No. 0 for preference, following the grain of the wood.

SIZING.

For school use, where for convenience, as few processes as possible are desirable, sizing can be omitted, but it fills up the grain or pores of the wood and this ensures a good even surface and a saving of paint and varnish.

To make the size put one tablespoonful into a cup, add a little cold water and leave it about ten minutes until the grains of the size have swollen. Then half fill the cup with hot water, stirring it well so that the size dissolves. While this is still warm, apply it evenly to the article with a brush, leaving it to dry before applying the paint. If the sizing should raise the grain of the wood at all, rub it gently down again with the glass-paper.

Where water-colours are used and a background colour is painted all over the object first, the process of sizing can be combined with the painting, by using the size to mix the paint instead of water.

PAINTING WITH WATER-COLOURS.

Water-colours are very simple to use and give good results. They are particularly convenient for school purposes, as only water is required to mix them. Either *opaque* or *transparent* water-colours can be used, but the choice must be left to the worker. The opaque colours are preferred by many because they may be used one upon the other, still retaining their brilliancy without the use of Chinese white, and are more vigorous in appearance than the transparent colours. With the latter, however, the full value of the markings or grain of the wood is retained, and for this reason they are used by some workers. The same method of working applies to both paints.

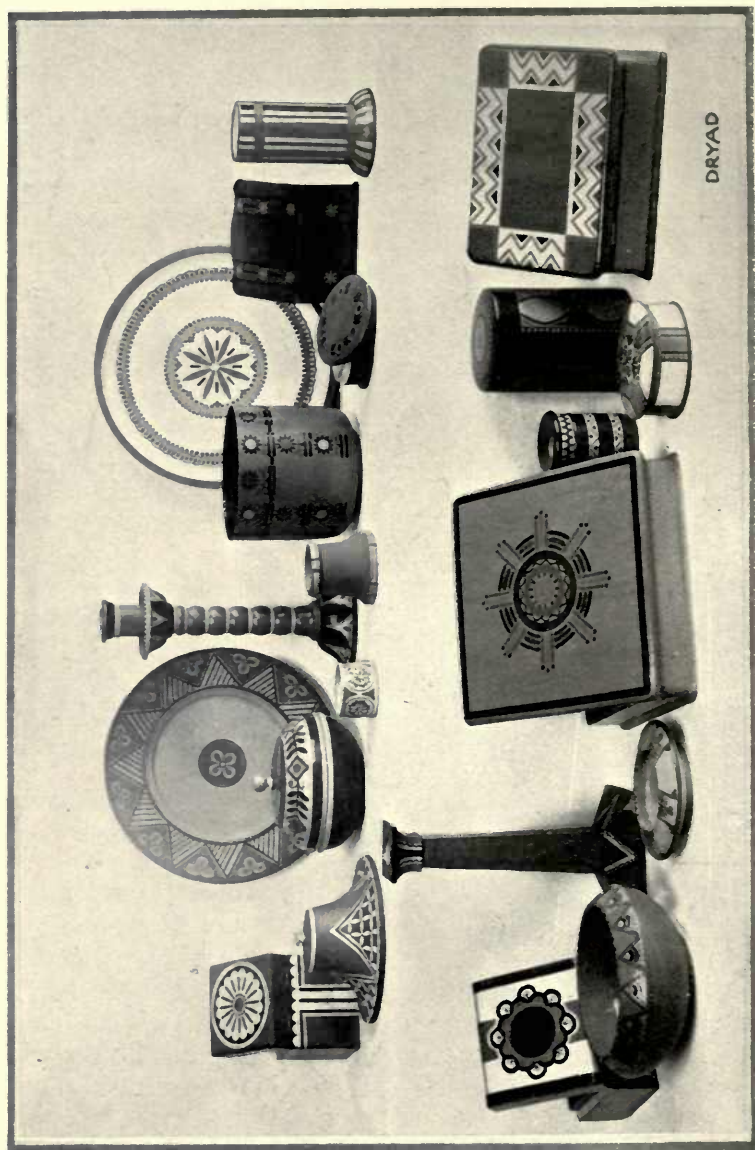


PLATE I.
A group of Dryad Painted Wood and Pulp Ware.

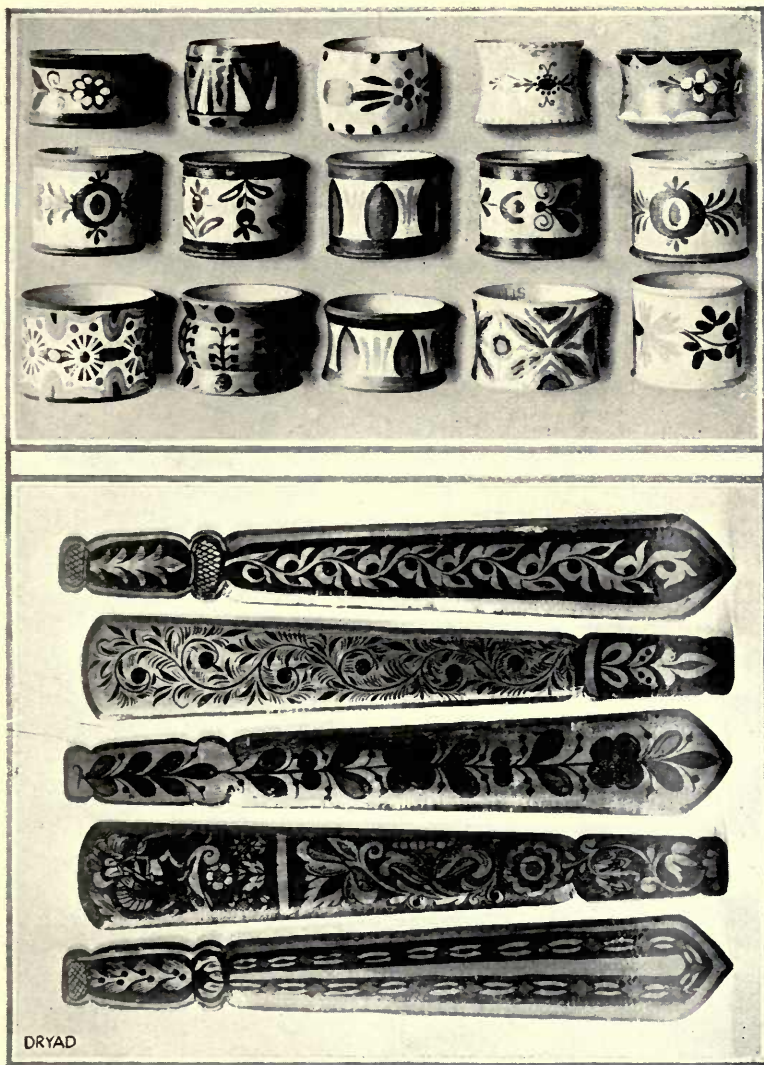


PLATE II.

Above. Painted Wooden Serviette Rings from Czecho-Slovakia.
 Below. Painted and Lacquered Paper Knives from Russia.

They must be mixed with sufficient water to allow them to be easily worked with the brush. Too much water will be inclined to raise the grain of the wood.

For broad surfaces do not attempt to get the full depth of colour with one coat of paint. Two thin coats are much better than one thick one. Let the first coat dry before putting on the next. To ensure a clear and even surface, it is necessary to have enough paint mixed so that one part may not be darker than another.

When the decoration is complete, the article should be set aside for a few hours to thoroughly dry, and then varnished, as this is necessary to make the colours permanent.

The colours of the opaque and transparent paints can be intermixed in each case to obtain other colours.

VARNISHING.

Varnish should be applied with a broad varnish brush. A stout spirit varnish or pale oil copal varnish are the most suitable. One or two coats are applied as required. Where size has not been used, two coats are almost essential to obtain a good surface.

The *spirit* varnish is recommended for quick drying. The first coat will take about half-an-hour to dry before applying a second. When finished, it should be left for three or four hours to harden thoroughly before handling, to prevent finger marks. The varnish should be applied with a fairly soft brush in a direct manner and left, as it dries quickly, and the surface will be spoilt if disturbed with the brush after it has once been applied.

Copal varnish gives a particularly good surface, is more durable than a spirit varnish and is also waterproof, although it will not hold water continually without marking. It can be obtained to give a bright or dull (matt) finish, whichever is preferred. It takes longer to dry, however; two or three hours should be allowed before applying a second coat, and to harden thoroughly it should be left for twenty-four hours.

Unlike the spirit varnish it can be "worked" into a smooth surface with the brush.

Working in a room free from dust will give the best results.

FRENCH POLISHING.

Some workers may wish to use French polish instead of varnish. In our previous edition of this leaflet it was stated that water colours would run when French polished, but we have now overcome this difficulty except with one colour, namely, purple. When the article has been painted, lightly rub over it first with a little linseed oil, using a pad made by placing wadding inside a piece of clean linen. Then moisten the pad with the French Polish and apply it lightly, taking care to go all over the surface and not to rub in the same place all the while. Take the pad the full length of the article in one movement, and not in small jerks. When the polish is dry rub over the surface with glass paper and then apply the polish again. Repeat in this manner until the required polish is obtained. The more rubbing and care taken the higher the polish will be.

Coloured inks, stains or dyes are inclined to run, so that it is only satisfactory to French polish these when the article is painted all over with one colour.

Some workers have used the polish where more than one colour of ink or stain have been introduced, applying it to the surface with a brush instead of the pad, but this is not entirely satisfactory, as again there is a tendency for the colours to run.

PAINTING WITH ENAMELS.

The Dryad enamels can be obtained with either a bright or a dull finish. They are excellent for covering large surfaces, and do not require varnishing. Enamel is thicker in substance than the water-colours, and therefore requires a bold design, which does not make it so suitable for small objects.

For the "ground colour," two coats of enamel are required, but only one for the "pattern work."

The dull enamel is waterproof and heatproof, and dries very quickly, taking only about an hour. It must therefore be applied with the brush in a direct manner and left, and must not be "worked" after it has been applied if a smooth surface is to be obtained. A special medium is obtainable for thinning purposes when necessary, and for cleaning the brushes. (This enamel is also excellent for painting on cork dinner mats, etc.)

The bright surface enamel is also waterproof, but dries much more slowly taking about twenty-four hours to dry and another twenty-four hours to harden thoroughly. It can, therefore, be "worked" with the brush when applying it. Turpentine is used for thinning it when necessary, and for cleaning the brushes.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR PAINTING PULP WARE.

Pulp ware is particularly suitable where a fairly large but lightweight article is required. It does not require sizing but should be rubbed over with glass paper. Either of the above-mentioned enamels are recommended for painting pulp ware, but for school use the opaque water-colours can be used if desired, in which case they must be mixed a little thicker than for the wood ware. Two or three coats are necessary to cover the foundation colour of the pulp with one or two coats of varnish.

OTHER SUGGESTIONS.

Below are given a few alternative suggestions for painting, which will doubtless interest the worker.

- (1) Mix gold size with oil-colour and paint directly on to the plain wood. This will make the pattern slightly raised.
- (2) Boxes can be stained with ordinary dyes and then decorated as already described.

Dryad Handicrafts, 42 St. Nicholas Street, Leicester, and 17 Duke Street, Manchester Square, London, W.1, supply all materials for this craft, catalogue post free 2d. on application.

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